

Hawaii MARINE

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Marines return from Japan

Pfc. Edward C. deBree
Combat Correspondent

Twenty-six Marines from Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 returned to their home base of Marine Corps Base, Kaneohe Bay, Dec. 7, and 45 Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 returned home, Dec. 12. Both squadrons are part of Marine Aircraft Group 24.

Both squadrons were deployed to Okinawa, Japan, where they were assigned with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. MALS-24 and HMH-362 deployed from K-Bay earlier this year, returning after the completion of their seven-month deployment. Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 left MCB Hawaii May 24 and MALS-24 left the following day.

During their deployment, MALS-24 participated training exercises that helped hone their skills and techniques in support of the ground units that were training in the Philippines. While training in the Philippines, the squadron practiced dropping Marines onto landing zones and their extraction and evacuation techniques.

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 conducted joint-training operations with units

See **RETURN**, A-8



Marines assigned to Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24 return to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Dec. 7, after their seven-month deployment to Okinawa, Japan, in support of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Forty-five Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 returned home from Japan, Dec. 12.



The Marine Forces Pacific Band attracts many spectators during a performance at Martin Place in downtown Sydney, Australia. The band performed 12 concerts at hospitals, schools and military installations during their two-week goodwill tour.

MarForPac Band tours in ‘the land Down Under’

Sgt. Ryan O'Hare
U.S. Marine Forces Pacific

SYDNEY, Australia — A land known for kangaroos, koala bears and crocodiles, Australia offers an abundance of sights and sounds. Recently, “the land down under” had one more attraction added to its long list of things to offer, the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific Band.

The MarForPac Band performed in local concerts and at hospitals, schools and military installations as part of a two-week goodwill tour throughout the Sydney area.

“The Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Band provides a way for us to tell the Marine Corps’ story to people all over the world,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Lauren LaVine, the MarForPac Band officer, from Bagley, Minn. “I consider us to be ambassadors of goodwill, because the product that we bring with us — music — is universal.”

Dr. David McIntosh, coordinator for the band's Australian performances, agreed that the MarForPac Band members would help promote goodwill through their music, when he sought them to perform in the annu-

al Glebe Music Festival.

“When I began coordinating the Glebe Music Festival, I realized that there would be many people within Sydney who would benefit by a visit from the Marine Forces Pacific Band,” said McIntosh. “When I began asking if other Australians would be interested in a performance by the MarForPac Band in the local area, I was overwhelmed by requests.”

These requests, ranging from downtown concerts and hospital visits to military ceremonies and musical clinics, were welcomed by the band members and led to the MarForPac Band performing 12 concerts within their short visit.

During their first concert at Concord Repatriation General Hospital on Nov. 24, the band offered one young audience member the opportunity to step on stage and lead the MarForPac Band as the guest musical conductor.

Tyler J. Chaffey, a sixth grader from Villawood East Public School, was chosen from the crowd.

“It was really fun to watch the band,” said Chaffey. “But my favorite part was getting to be the guy with

the stick, I liked that part the best.”

Later that day, Marines also made time to perform and visit with children at the Westmead Children’s Hospital. The children who were either too ill or unable to leave their hospital beds to attend the band’s brass quintet concert in the hospital music room were able to watch the performance on television monitors from their rooms.

“For many of the children, we were their first visitors, besides family members, since they were admitted to the hospital. It was rewarding to see the smiles on their faces, but it really meant a lot to have their parents shake our hands and say, ‘Thank you,’ with tears in their eyes.”

A Westmead Children’s Hospitals’ oncology nurse, Christina Marrinan, also a local jazz singer, was presented with the opportunity to perform the following day with the MarForPac Band’s jazz combo at Saint Andrews College.

“What a wonderful opportunity,” said Marrinan. “It’s always been a dream of mine to sing with a big

See **BAND**, A-7

General, children light Christmas tree

Band, decorations help get residents in holiday spirit

Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson
Combat Correspondent

Sunday evening, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay was filled with holiday cheer as base residents and guests awaited the beginning of the 2005 MCB Hawaii Holiday Concert and Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Dewey Square.

The evening began at 5:30 p.m.

with the welcome by Brig. Gen. Steve A. Hummer, base commander, and an opening prayer by Chaplain Navy Lt. Daniel C. Owens, Headquarter Battalion, before Christmas music was played by the Marine Forces Pacific Band. The Jazz Combo as well as the Brass Quintet provided entertainment before Brig. Hummer gave his remarks and invited some of the children in the crowd to join him as he pushed down the lever that lit the Christmas tree.

After the tree-lighting ceremony that showed off hundreds of colored lights, children and their parents gathered around the tree and sang a variety of Christmas carols such as

“O Come All Ye Faithful,” “The First Noel,” “Deck the Halls” and “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” to name just a few.

The evening wasn’t complete until the arrival of Santa Claus, who arrived atop fire truck. Santa had plenty of Ho, Ho, Hos as well as goodies in his sack that he gave to the children, before the evening came to a festive close.

“This is the first tree-lighting ceremony I’ve attended that I can honestly remember,” said Lt. Cmdr. Matt Zardeskas, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2.

Zardeskas, who has only been aboard K-Bay since October, said he and his family were very pleased with the celebration.

“I think everyone did a really great job with this event,” said the Whidbey, Wash. native. “With all the warm weather, it can be difficult to get into the holiday spirit, sometimes. The display is beautiful, though, and the band sounded wonderful.”



Brig. Gen. Steven A. Hummer, commanding general, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, and two of the children who attended the tree-lighting ceremony light MCB Hawaii’s Christmas tree, Sunday.

NEWS BRIEFS

Oahu Star to Replace Hawaii Marine for Two Weeks

The Hawaii Marine will not be published for the next two weeks. The newspaper's audience, will instead receive a copy of the Oahu Star.

Also, articles may still be submitted for consideration and may run in the Oahu Star, which will be available Friday and Dec. 30 or in the Hawaii Marine, Jan. 6, 2006.

Liberty Bus Cancellation

There will be no Waikiki Liberty Bus shuttle service during the weekend of Dec. 23 and 24. Shuttle service will resume on the weekend of Dec. 30.

For questions regarding the Liberty Bus, or the schedule, contact Lee Yamamoto, Base Facilities, at 257-2171, ext. 222.

Construction Project Continues

Construction on the Marine Mart parking lot entrance and exit from G Street and the H-3 outbound exit is ongoing and should be completed by Friday, depending on the weather.

For the duration of this construction project, the speed limit is reduced and one lane will be closed to provide a buffer zone between vehicular traffic and the construction workers. Drive safely, and slow down at all construction zones.

Post Office Extends Hours

The Base Post Office will have extended hours through Friday for the holiday season. The Base Post Office will be open from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

The Base Post Office will be open Dec. 24 for parcel pickup only.

For more information, contact the Base Post Office at 257-2008.

PWMA Continues to Accept Brick Orders

Orders for inscribed/personalized bricks, to be placed in the Pacific War Memorial's "Walkway of Honor," which is located near the Main/H-3 Gate entrance to MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, may be made now through the end of December.

More information is available from the Pacific War Memorial Association by calling 533-3759, or online at www.pacificwarmemorial.org.

Gas Lane Closures

A gas station canopy project has been underway since Nov. 7 and is slated to take six to seven months to complete, after construction begins. The canopy will be built in phases, which means that half of the gasoline pumps will be unavailable for consumer use at any given time.

For questions concerning this project, call George Kelsey, MCCA, 254-7689 or Ken Takeya, MCCA, 254-7539.

Read the Hawaii Marine Online

To access the Hawaii Marine online, log on to www.mcbh.usmc.mil and click on the "Hawaii Marine" link. The current newspaper and past issues are available.

Important Phone Numbers

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110

Correction

In the December 9th issue of the Hawaii Marine, an article ran regarding, The Aloha Chapter Chosin Few, holding their 11th Annual Toys for Tots Christmas Party. In the article, it states that Robert E. Talmadge is the acting president of the Chosin Few, Aloha Chapter. Talmadge is actually the former president, and James Ward is the president. Ward was interviewed for the story, Talmadge was not.

MPs DARE Mokapu students to live a drug-free lifestyle

Pfc. Edward C. deBree

Combat Correspondent

There are many things in the world today that can destroy people's bodies. Drugs, alcohol and tobacco all have the potential to cause damage to the body, and, according to Drug Abuse Resistance Education officials,



Pfc. Edward C. deBree

Fifth grade students at Mokapu Elementary School on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, take the DARE pledge Dec. 8. The students taking the DARE class were taught the harmful effects that drugs, alcohol and tobacco have on the human body and how to avoid peer pressure.

people are being exposed to these substances at younger ages every year. In an effort to educate youths about the hazards involved with all three, DARE officials on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, conducted a course at Mokapu Elementary School for 86 fifth graders. On Dec. 8, a DARE graduation ceremony was held for the students.

The DARE program gives children the right tools to make healthy decisions for the rest of their life, said Sgt. Nathan J. DeWeerd, military police physical security specialist, Military Police Department.

"What the DARE program used to do is focus on teaching kids to say no to drugs without giving specific reasons," said the 25-year-old Ludington, Mich. native. "Now the program tells children the harmful effects drugs, alcohol and tobacco can have on a person's body."

Though this was the first time DeWeerd taught the program to fifth grade students, he said things went very well in making the children more aware of drugs.

Lori Morimoto, a fifth grade teacher at Mokapu Elementary School said, "He taught it (the DARE course) in a very hands-on way. He gave life experiences, took control of the classroom, and played games with the children. The children really enjoyed him teaching the program to them."

Morimoto said that the DARE program showed the children that everyone is in the fight against drugs. And, this fight brings the school, community, family and police together to show the children that it is more than just another homework assignment.

"We did a lot fun stuff like experiments and games," said 10-year-old Cody

Chapel bells to toll Christmas Day

Chaplain (Lt.) Daniel C. Whitaker

Base Chapel

I heard the bells on Christmas Day; their old familiar carols play; and wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

— **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

This well-known verse by poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow portrays the future of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, as the bell tower adjacent to the new Base Chapel will ring out for the first time this Christmas morning.

The tower and bells are among the many unique features of the base's new chapel, which was dedicated June 3. The tower actually holds only one large bronze bell, designed and created by the Verdin Company, which has specialized in casting bells since 1842. The tower also holds a digital carillon, capable of reproducing the sounds of 40 different bells. A carillon is an arrangement of numerous bells all connected to a central keyboard, which allows one person, the carillonneur, to produce songs and other appropriate peals. The MCB Hawaii bell tower's carillon reproduces this effect digitally and projects the sound throughout the base via four powerful speakers. The sounds are recorded from 40 bells, weighing from 24 pounds to more than 4,700 pounds, covering a range of four octaves. The total price for the carillon and bronze bell was approximately \$25,000. According to William Knowles, representative for Verdin, the company's bells ring from more than 35,000 sites around the world, but this is their first carillon and bell arrangement on a U.S. military chapel.

The capabilities of the carillon are astounding. More than 2,000 songs and effects can be selected and played at pre-programmed times and intervals. Many of the selections are traditional calls to worship, hymns, Christmas carols, and other religious works. However, the tower can also play a wide range of patriotic, classical, seasonal, cultural, and popular selections, including "Yesterday" by the Beatles, "Ding! Dong! The Witch is Dead," and "Home on the Range."

Several songs, unique to our Hawaiian and military setting, were recorded exclu-

sively for MCB Hawaii. These include "Blue Hawaii," "Mele Kalikimaka," "The Marines' Hymn," "Anchors Aweigh," and various bugle calls. New songs can be created as necessary.

Kent Murata, the base assistant chief of staff, G-4, played a vital role in the design and construction of the new base chapel and its bell tower.

"We agreed a bell tower would be nice, to provide an architectural focus in a spiritual gathering place," he said. "It adds to the aesthetics of the chapel itself, symbolizing soaring skyward towards God." In the face of financial obstacles, operational priorities, and other delays, construction of the chapel began in February 2004. "The whole project was a gift from God," said Murata, "and it is a highlight of my career."

Bells have been used for centuries in chapels, synagogues and other worship settings.

They were primarily used to call people to worship, sometimes employing complex patterns to communicate specific messages about the worship service. Ringing bells could also indicate to those unable to attend that various sections of the service were in progress.

Church bells have traditionally been rung on other occasions, as well. On days of joy, as at weddings, times of victory, holy days, and community celebrations, the bells would sound out cheerful music. For more somber events, as for funerals, an appropriately solemn tone would be used. Bells and towers expanded from their religious roots and found common place in town halls, city squares and on public monuments and other community gathering places.

Following these traditions, the bell tower and carillon at the Base Chapel will make its debut on Christmas morning. The carillon will play customary calls to worship, as well as Christmas carols. It will sound off before the 8 a.m. Liturgical Protestant, the 9:30 a.m.

Page. "I'm going to always stay away from drugs, because I've learned that marijuana kills over 10,000 brain cells, and I don't want my brain cells to die."

As part of the course, the fifth graders took part in an essay-writing contest. After certificates were handed out during their graduation ceremony, DeWeerd announced the winner of the essay contest.

"I took all the reports that the kids gave to me and picked the best ones from each class," said DeWeerd. "Then I looked at the three reports, and I chose the one that didn't just spit back the information I gave to them. And Brianna Ash's just stuck out. She made it clear that she understood everything that she was taught."

Brianna was asked, during the graduation ceremony, to read her essay to the entire fifth grade class, which she admitted to be a little nervous about doing.

"I was surprised when he said my name, when he announced the winner," said the 10-year-old. "But I was happy that Sgt. 'D' was there for us and told us what to do in situations where people offer drugs. I don't want to be a drug addict, and I don't want to be a smoker. I want to stay just the way that I am."

After having taught this year's fifth grade class, DeWeerd said he is looking forward to teaching the program to students next year.

"This whole thing has been nothing short of awesome," he said. "I love the look on the children's faces when they figure something out for themselves, and I really look forward to the next class because there is nothing in the world like teaching kids. And as long as one of these kids turns down drugs because they thought back and remembered something I have said, that makes it all worth while."



Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson

The chapel bell stands ready to toll, for the first time, on Christmas Day. The tower's digital carillon can reproduce more than 40 different bell tones.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — partly cloudy with isolated afternoon rain showers; easterly winds 8 to 10 mph; 20 percent chance of rain

Night — partly cloudy with isolated rain showers; variable winds at 5 mph; 20 percent chance of rain

High — 79
Low — 72

Saturday



Day — partly cloudy with isolated rain showers; southwesterly winds around 15 mph; 20 percent chance of rain

Night — partly cloudy with scattered rain showers; southwesterly winds around 15 mph; 30 percent chance of rain

High — 79 Low — 71

Sunday



Day — partly cloudy becoming mostly cloudy by noon with scattered rain showers; southwesterly winds 10 to 12 mph; 60 percent chance of rain

Night — mostly cloudy with numerous rain showers; northwesterly winds 10 mph; 80 percent chance of rain

High — 79
Low — 68

Hawaii MARINE

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3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment heads

Back to the desert

Lima Company prepares for Iraq with live-fire exercise at Twentynine Palms



Marines assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, train for the Global War on Terrorism at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Sgt. Monroe F. Seigle
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — It was a cold day in the Mojave Desert Dec. 2., when gunfire and mortar explosions echoed throughout the Bullion Mountains. The Marines from America’s Battalion followed suit, assaulting the first of three bunkers on Range 410A.

When the training mission was over, hundreds of casings littered the ground after being expelled from rifles and machine guns.

This is how Marines assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, train for the Global War on Terrorism. Training missions like this one, conducted in the Mojave Desert, are designed to ready them for their upcoming deployment to Iraq where they will assist the Iraqi Security Forces with the task of providing security and stability in the Al Anbar province of Iraq.

For many of these Marines, combat is not something they have only heard about in the news or trained for. Approximately half of the battalion experienced combat, firsthand, last year when they deployed to Afghanistan.

Dec. 2 was just one day of many that required the Marines from Lima Company to put their war-fighting skills to the test. While they found easily identifiable enemies hiding in bunkers, like the one on the range, they learned that enemy forces are not clearly

sectioned off with concertina wire and wearing identifiable uniforms. They learned that they are lurking in the homes, buildings and businesses of Iraqi civilians.

“We all know how important it is for us to train our hardest out here, but the Marines also have to prepare themselves, mentally, before they go to Iraq,” said Lance Cpl. Mark English, 22, from Topeka, Kans., and team leader with Lima Company. “This is one of the last chances we will have to train before going out there. I’m ready to go, and I’m confident the Marines in my company are as well.”

Once in Iraq, Lima Company, one of the three rifle companies that make up America’s Battalion, will be part of Regimental Combat Team 7 and will continue the fight to stabilize the newly formed Iraqi government and assist Iraqi security forces in daily missions.

For the next three weeks, the Marines from Lima Company will be training, daily, in the Mojave Desert. At conclusion of this training, the Marines will return to their homes in Hawaii to spend some time with family and friends prior to their deployment to Iraq.

“This is the last major training cycle that we are going to be able to get in before we go to Iraq,” said Sgt. Rodrigue Jean-Paul, 30, a native of Queens, N.Y. and squad leader with Lima Company.

“Most of the Marines in Lima Company know how important it is to take training seriously, and it is reflecting in their performance. After this, it is going to be real-world missions.”



Marines assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, conduct live-fire exercises aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif. The training is part of Exercise Mojave Viper and will prepare the Marines for their upcoming deployment to Iraq.

America’s Battalion trains Guard Force

Sgt. Monroe F. Seigle
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER, TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — Every Marine learns first and foremost that he is a rifleman.

A select few Marines from the Hawaii-based 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, are about to get back to basics and hone their war-fighting skills in order to provide security and force protection for their fellow Marines.

These Marines are appropriately called “guard forces.” They will be protecting the entrances and perimeters of the forward operating bases in Iraq as well as convoys moving throughout their area of operation. In addition, they will also be able to provide reinforcement during military operations in urban terrain.

What is most unique about this group is that it is composed of Marines from a wide range of military occupational specialties that came together to learn the same skills.

The Marines were selected for the duty before deploying for the monthlong exercise here known as “Mojave Viper.”

According to Capt. Nick Nuzzo, Headquarters and Service Company Commander, 3/3, the Guard Force was originally formed in Afghanistan to free up

infantry Marines from having to protect the forward operating bases and keep them on the battlefield. The Marines selected had shown high levels of motivation, potential leadership skills and were from non-infantry military occupational specialties.

“I liked being able to get away from my normal work routine in a supply warehouse,” said 19-year-old Pfc. Larry Moody from Mesa, Ariz., as he guarded the entrance of a forward operating base for Mojave Viper. “This is the kind of training I joined the Marine Corps to do.”

When the Marines in the guard force deploy to Iraq early next year, they will be tasked with performing their guard-force duties in addition to remaining proficient with their specific military occupational skills.

“This kind of training benefits Marines and the Marine Corps as a whole,” said Nuzzo. “The fact that many of these Marines volunteered to be a part of the Guard Force shows a lot of motivation. They are learning a lot quickly and, even though they are performing out of their job field and comfort zone, they are adapting quickly.”

As the deployment date to Iraq nears, the Marines in the guard force are constantly



A Marine assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, trains to be part of America’s Battalion’s Guard Force, which was originally set up when the unit was deployed to Afghanistan.

training and being schooled on infantry tactics by Marines who have served in the infantry field.

Cpl. David Parkinson, a fire-team leader with the Guard Force, has spent many hours passing on the vital skills infantrymen use to fight the War on Terrorism. He is one of several Marines with an infantry MOS who serves as both an instructor and a unit leader within the guard force.

“The skills the guard force Marines are learning everyday are skills that all Marines in

non-combat MOS’s should learn and be familiar with,” said Parkinson after a training evolution. “They are quickly learning the skills they are going to need to know when they are in Iraq. I enjoy teaching the Marines because they are all eager to learn and have achieved a new level of discipline.”

The Marines who form the Guard Force will continue to train, daily, until they depart Mojave Viper and return to their homes in Hawaii. From there, they will deploy to fight the Global War on Terrorism.



Marines assigned to America’s Battalion secure an injured Marine to a stretcher during a simulation. The Marines are part of the battalion’s Guard Force, which is comprised of Marines from a wide range of military occupational specialties.

Sgt. Monroe F. Seigle

On the skyline ... with 1/3

by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

On the Skyline is a weekly column written by Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Combat Correspondent Sgt. Joe Lindsay. Lindsay has recently returned to K-Bay with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine

Regiment, from California, where they trained to prepare them for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Sergeant puts the safety of his troops ahead of his own

First Sgt. Gerard Calvin, first sergeant for Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, sat behind his desk aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, exuding the air of a man who knows his stature and power, yet does not throw it around for its own sake.

When he speaks, people listen. In fact, they do more than listen — they act. His every word to the Marines in his combat line company is obeyed like a sacrament.

As he readies himself, and his men, for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom — Calvin’s third such visit to that country — he spoke of one of his Marines in a way a father might speak of a son who has just graduated from college, or a daughter who was about to wed her “Prince Charming.” In a word, he was proud.

Proud that one of his Marines — Sgt. Michael Chambers — a platoon sergeant in Charlie Company’s 3rd Platoon, had just been awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” for his heroic actions during the battle for Fallujah, Iraq, while serving in the same billet with 1st Platoon.

“I feel blessed to have a Marine like Sergeant Chambers in Charlie Company,” said the Richmond, Va., native, as he went over a laundry list of reasons why he had recently recommended Chambers for meritorious promotion to staff sergeant. “Sergeant Chambers gets it. He understands. A Marine like him knows that it’s not about him. It’s about the Marine to the left and right of him. He puts his own personal safety aside for his fellow Marines. He goes beyond just the textbook training.”

Indeed. During a recent ceremony aboard the base, Chambers was presented the Bronze Star with combat “V” as 1,000 of his fellow Lava Dogs looked on. The citation, in part, read:

For heroic achievement in connection with combat operations involving conflict with an opposing force while serving as platoon sergeant, 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3. The platoon came under a heavy barrage of enemy hand grenade, rocket-pro-

pelled grenade, machine-gun and small-arms fire. Seeing a wounded Marine trapped in the impact zone, and with total disregard for his safety, he charged through a hail of machine-gun fire and shrapnel, and pulled the wounded Marine to safety. While assessing the wounded, he saw another wounded Marine trapped across and open field, directly in front of the enemy positions. Ignoring his own shrapnel wounds, he crossed the field through a barrage of machine-gun, small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire, hoisted the Marine on his shoulder and carried him to safety.

The Bronze Star and the Purple Heart medals he received from his tour in Iraq only begin to tell the story of that fateful day. Perhaps none know that more than the men who served with Chambers and witnessed his valor.

“When we saw the Marines wounded out there in the open, there was no question that we were going to go out there and try to save them,” said Staff Sgt. Ralph Scott, 1/3 assistant operations chief who was then serving as the platoon commander for 1st Platoon.

“Sergeant Chambers and I never had to speak. We just looked at each other. The look said, ‘This could be it.’ Meaning, basically, we’re probably gonna die. That look only lasted a split second. We both knew what we were going to do. We weren’t going to leave those Marines wounded and pinned down in an open field to die,” admitted the Tallahassee, Fla., native.

And, go get them they did. “He threw that Marine on his back and saved his life,” said Cpl. Chris Doucette, a 1/3 rifleman and squad leader with Charlie Company’s 1st Platoon, 2nd Squad. “Then he went out and did it again for another wounded Marine. When you are in combat, it builds your confidence, knowing there are Marines like Sergeant Chambers out there who have your back.”

“Having served in Fallujah with him, I’ve seen what kind of Marine he



Sgt. Joe Lindsay

Sgt. Michael Chambers, platoon sergeant, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, has his Bronze Star with combat “V” pinned on, Nov. 21, at a flagpole ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

is, what kind of a man he is,” added the Norco, Calif. native. “He’s a Marine’s Marine.”

For his part, Chambers is quick to diffuse any praise thrown his way.

“I didn’t do anything that any other one of those Marines wouldn’t have done, given the same circumstances,” said Chambers, a native of Lexington, S.C. “It just so happened that everyone else, besides me and Staff Sergeant Scott, was pinned down. It could have been anybody. I don’t hold myself to a higher standard. I’m a Marine. I do what I gotta do, ‘cause that’s what I do.”

There are those who would argue that Chambers is a cut above, but he said he has never seen himself in those terms.



Born in Black Mountain, N.C., Chambers moved with his family to Lexington, a small South Carolina town where patriotism runs high, and where the townsfolk aren’t afraid to show it.

“I was raised on the outskirts of town, basically in the woods, and there’s no way I’d ever live anywhere else,” said Chambers, a brick of a man who wouldn’t look out of place on the field of any football team in the NFL. “South Carolina is home. Lexington is home.

“The Marine Corps can send me anywhere they want, and I’ll happily go. But when it’s all said and done, after I retire from the Corps, you’ll be able to find me in Lexington — hunting deer, fishing, spending time with my family. South Carolina — that’s where I belong.”

After graduating from high school in 1992, Chambers took jobs as a machinist and carpenter. Then, one day, four of his buddies got together, with Chambers in tow, and headed down to the Marine Corps recruiting office.

“It was one of those deals where we were all going to go in together on the buddy system,” recalled Chambers, half laughing with the knowing smirk of a man who knows better now. “Of course, only two of us ended up actually going in, and it wasn’t on any buddy system. Still, my friend who did sign up did his four years honorably, and now he’s out. Eleven years later, I’m still here, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

After graduating boot camp, which is literally down the road from Lexington at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., Chambers completed his first enlistment at Camp Lejeune, N.C., before heading back to Parris Island, this time as a drill instructor.

“When I got the opportunity to become a drill instructor, I jumped at it. It was a great feeling seeing the recruits develop into Marines.”

After his stint on the drill field, Chambers stayed put at Parris Island where he served with Weapons Training Battalion before making a permanent change of station to 1/3 in Hawaii.

Since then, Chambers has spent precious little time on 1/3’s home island Oahu, spending the majority of his time on deployments to the

See CHAMBERS, A-6

CPRW-2 recognizes Sailors of the Year

Lt. Cmdr. Nicholas Andrews
Patron Wing 2 Admin/Public Affairs Officer

Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2 recently recognized four Sailors for their outstanding performance by naming them Sailor of the Year.

The categories and winners are:

Senior Sea Sailor of the Year, Petty Officer 1st Class Leonard L. Williamson

Senior Shore Sailor of the Year, Petty Officer 1st Class Rodney H. Love

Junior Sea Sailor of the Year, Petty Officer 2nd Class Rachel M. Olmsted

Junior Shore Sailor of the Year, Petty Officer 2nd Class Bradley J. La Fontaine

Each winner was presented

with a plaque and awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal by Navy Capt. Robert J. Adrion, commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 2.

CPRW-2, which encompasses more than 10 different units, is the parent command of four patrol squadrons, one executive transport detachment and several other tenant Navy commands home based aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

This year's recipients have contributed significantly to improving not only the performance of each of their individual units, they have also improved the overall performance of Wing 2.



Petty Officer 1st Class Leonard L. Williamson — CPRW-2 Senior Sea Sailor of the Year, native of Claysville, Pa., is the 100 Division leading petty officer, Special Projects Patrol Squadron 2.



Petty Officer 1st Class Rodney H. Love — CPRW-2 Senior Shore Sailor of the Year, native of Biloxi, Miss., is the Air Traffic Control Facility leading petty officer, Marine Corps Air Facility.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Rachel M. Olmsted — CPRW-2 Junior Sea Sailor of the Year, native of Gillespie, Ill., is the Administrative Department assistant leading petty officer, Patrol Squadron 9.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Bradley J. La Fontaine — CPRW-2 Junior Shore Sailor of the Year, native of Edison, N.J., is the Work Center 660 leading petty officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24.



COMMENTARY

Informal poll suggests some MREs should be retired

Sgt. Robert M. Storm
Combat Correspondent

Meals-Ready-to-Eat, like my Marines I avoid eating MREs whenever possible. However, since I spent the first four years of my Marine Corps career as a “grunt,” and this last year as a deployed combat correspondent, I’ve become a reluctant expert on MREs.

I also understand that no matter what you do to an MRE, it will never be fine dining. No matter what you do to them or how you mix them, they will still taste like an MRE. I know how to make all the recipes — using cocoa to make frosting for the pound cake, mixing the cheese in the beans with beefsteak or chicken to make chili, and other dishes.

Admittedly, according to stories I hear from Marines who have been in far longer than me, MREs are infinitely better now than they ever were before. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t room for improvement. There are many little things that can be done to make these meals far better. In the interest of providing input, I interviewed more than 500 Marines from a



STORM

Iraq, when, due to supply malfunctions, my unit was living on one MRE a day. You could still find the main meal to CCC lying around because Marines would rather starve than eat it.

Besides these two meals, many other changes were suggested. Ninety percent agreed that buttered noodles just plain suck. While slightly less

deployed infantry battalion that is currently in Afghanistan where they are supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. The following are the suggestions that I received from them. I have rounded the percentages to the nearest tenth.

Meals that need to disappear. Of 500 Marines, only two liked Country Captain Chicken and four liked Veggie Burger. The rest thought that these two MREs were quite possibly the worst food on the planet. I personally remember, at one point on a previous tour to

— 70 percent — said that at least one of the rice packs needed to go. However, most Marines couldn’t agree which rice had to go, because they generally liked at least one version. Universally, unanimously, and Marines agreed that the new wheat snack bread tasted horrible and they wanted the old wheat snack bread brought back. Various comparisons to rubber tires and warm, wet cardboard were brought up when discussing the new wheat snack bread.

Marines also had other suggestions. More than 60 percent said that more fruit should be added. But 30 percent of the fruit lovers said they didn’t like applesauce. Eighty percent said that cocoa was a waste. Many times hot water is a luxury in the field, and Marines find it too bothersome to heat up the water. They said that they would rather have beverage powder so that they can just add water, shake it up and drink it. Besides, they also said that if the troops really wanted cocoa, it was easy enough to bring with them. One hundred percent also agreed that they would prefer something else to red Tabasco. Many complained it was too strong and just burned your

mouth, or it tasted too vinegary. The three top suggestions as a replacement were green Tabasco, Texas Pete hot sauce, or Tapitio. Another big suggestion from 70 percent of the troops was to bring back franks and beans, otherwise known as the four fingers of death. Marines couldn’t understand how this meal was replaced while the beef and mushroom meal stayed.

These were the top suggestions that I received during my informal survey. I took many other suggestions and came up with responses like: more M&Ms, more vanilla wafer cookies, get rid of this, bring back that, and on and on. Most of these comments were in the 20 to 30 percent range and could be explained as just personal preference.



3/3 prepares for rigors of Iraq

Sgt. Monroe F. Seigle
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS, Calif. — It was not a normal training day, Dec. 6, for the Marines of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, who were undergoing training in the monthlong exercise, Mojave Viper.

It was a day many of the Hawaii-based Marines got to see, first-hand, the combined assets the Marine Corps has to offer in the Global War on Terrorism.

Their mission that day was to attack an enemy position, enclosed by concertina wire, with the help of air support, tanks, artillery and combat engineers.

As soon as the bunker was in view, the ramps of amphibious assault vehicles lowered to the ground and desert dust plumed into the air as the Marines from Kilo Company charged out of the vehicles to kick off the live-fire, combined-arms exercise.

Blast echoed in the air as the high-powered machine guns laid down fire to suppress the enemy position. The Marines began their offensive and moved tactically toward the objective.

“Fire at that second bunker, Marines!” the voice of a Marine shouted through the gunfire. Moments later, the Marines were within feet of the bunker. Aerial support continued to fire beyond the Marines, pounding the concrete pillbox. Now, combat engineers were responsible for breaching the concertina wire between them and the enemy.

The teamwork soon paid off. The area directly in front of the concertina wire was cleared of any possible land mines and a board laid across the sharp wire. The path was now clear for the Marines to charge through the smoke-filled perimeter and set up fighting positions in a trench.

Within 45 minutes, an infantry company,

artillery battery, fixed-wing aircraft and a couple of engineers had neutralized an enemy bunker.

“Cease fire! Cease Fire!” yelled one of the ‘Coyotes,’ a member of the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group who job it was to oversee the range. A split second later, the thunderous rips of gunfire ceased and all was quiet.

“They did all right,” said a Coyote, moments after the cease-fire as he stood above a trench filled with Marines. The Marines knew that comment from the Coyote, wearing a bright orange vest to distinguish himself from the rest of the Marines on the battlefield, reflected their performance.

Just as quickly as the Marines plowed into the enemy area, they moved out — going back over the concertina wire to the AAV.

The training for the day was over, but the Marines were only halfway through the monthlong exercise. They had sand and gunpowder covering their faces. Some were tired, and some were hungry, but all were proud of themselves for their performance.

As they returned to Camp Wilson, where they call home while conducting Mojave Viper, one Marine talked about how he would like nothing more than a double cheeseburger with bacon, a cold soda, and some French fries.

“Well, you can eat that while I take a shower,” said another Marine. They laughed at the comment and agreed a shower would be better.



Sgt. Monroe F. Seigle

Marines assigned to Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, run through the California desert during Mojave Viper, a monthlong training exercise to prepare the Marines to deploy to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“This training was challenging, because we had to keep all the moving parts of this mission in line while we had overhead fire,” said 22-year-old Columbia, Md. native Cpl. Chase Snider, who serves as a team leader in Kilo Company. “This training is great for the Marines, because they got to see all the other aspects of war fighting besides the infantry side of the house.”

Snider celebrated his 22nd birthday during Mojave Viper, and said he was eager to go

home and celebrate it with the Marines he would be deploying to Iraq with.

Mojave Viper, and other training exercises are serving to prepare America’s Battalion for their upcoming deployment during which they will help train the Iraqi Security Forces and provide security and stability for the new Iraqi government.

For now, the Marines in Kilo Company are training everyday until they return to their homes in Hawaii, before leaving for Iraq.

CHAMBERS, From A-4

Big Island for combined-arms exercises and to California for the Infantry Leaders Course and Mountain Leaders Course. And, of course, the 10 months he spent deployed during Operation Iraq Freedom II.

Through it all, Chambers said he credits his wife, Michelle, a native of Gaston, S.C., for keeping the family strong.

“My wife is an amazing woman,” said Chambers. “When I left for Iraq she was eight months pregnant; plus she had our boys, Trevor, 12, and Tyler, 8, to raise. During that time she also moved us out of our old place and

into our new house, packing everything herself and basically just getting it done. Then, she went and gave birth by herself and brought the baby, Triston, who’s 15 months old now, home by herself. She still found the time to take our two older boys back and forth from football, baseball and basketball practice and do all the other things mothers do. My hat really goes off to her.”

For the Lava Dogs of 1/3, it seems their hats, or covers, are the ones going off to Chambers anytime his name is mentioned.

“His professionalism is beyond reproach,” commented Staff Sgt. Mark Robinson, acting company gunnery sergeant for Charlie

Company, 1/3, and a native of Newark, N.J. “He’s an awesome Marine. He knows what to do in all facets of Marine Corps training; he’s proven he knows what to do in combat, and I don’t think there is another Marine out there who could do a better job.”

“Sergeant Chambers loves the Marine Corps, and he loves his Marines,” added Lance Cpl. Chris Berggren, a 1/3 rifleman from Lincoln, Neb., who served with Chambers in Iraq. “He sacrifices for his Marines. His Marines always come first. Anybody who serves with him, especially the other Fallujah vets, can’t help but be proud to say they served with a man like

Sergeant Chambers. I’ll remember him long after I’ve left the Corps.”

Other Lava Dogs who served with Chambers in Iraq said they couldn’t agree more.

“If his Marines need something, Sergeant Chambers gets it, whether it’s ammo for a SAW (squad automatic weapon) or a Pepsi,” said Lance Cpl. Christopher Harris, a 1/3 rifleman from Jasper, Texas. “If his Marines say they need it and, of course, if Sergeant Chambers agrees that they need it, then he finds a way to produce it. You can just tell he cares about his Marines. He’s hard on us, but he won’t let anybody else mess with his guys.”

‘Skinny Dragons’ help prepare ship for deployment

Public Affairs Staff
Patrol Squadron 4

The Abraham Lincoln Strike Group, lead by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72), home ported in San Diego, is now prepared for deployment and mission-ready, thanks in part to Patrol Squadron 4, home based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

Members of VP-4 recently traveled to San Diego to participate in the Joint Task Force Exercise for the Abraham Lincoln Strike Group and the initial Component Training Unit Exercise for the Ronald Reagan Strike Group, lead by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN-76).

The JTFEX was the final step in preparing the Strike Group for deployment and is designed to test the strike group’s ability to operate in a complex, hostile environment with other U.S. and coalition forces.

The COMTUEX was held to prepare the Ronald Reagan Strike Group for its upcoming JTFEX, to be held early next year. A total of seven P-3 Orion aircrews and 15 maintenance personnel participated in the 23-day event. Joining VP-4 and its patrol aircraft were P-3 Orion crews from VP-9, also based at K-Bay. VP-1 and VP-46, home based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, also supported the training exercise.

Canadian Squadron 407 also participated, flying the CP-140 Aurora, the Canadian version of the P-3.

The training conducted during the JTFEX and COMTUEX served to evaluate the overall effec-

tiveness of each strike group in surface and undersea warfare. During the exercise, the P-3 aircrews flew almost around the clock, participating in multiple scenarios.

Certain ships and submarines from a battle group served as opposing forces. The P-3s from the strike group located and tracked their movements. The nature of the exercises allowed aircrews to hone their skills and gain invaluable real-world experience.

Navy Lt. Bobby Ward, an upgrading Tactical Coordinator on Combat Air Crew 4, said, “The training was incredible. Both the strike group and the maritime patrol aircraft crews gained a better understanding of their respective roles within the tactical picture.”

Navy Lt. Ryan Davis, the mission commander for Combat Air Crew 2, agreed. He remarked, “This was real-world training where VP-4 not only participated, but thrived. The various scenarios presented by the battle group helped my crew to come together and gain valuable experience as a member of the strike group.”

VP-4 flew 13 events for a total of more than 90 hours. Though the near-constant flying took a toll on the squadron aircraft, the maintenance personnel worked around-the-clock to service the aircraft and keep them fully mission capable. Through their hard work and dedication, the maintenance personnel kept the planes at a 99 percent mission capable rate.

The Skinny Dragons of VP-4 are currently in San Diego participating in the COMTUEX for the Peleliu Expeditionary Strike Group, lead by the amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA-5).



Navy Airman Ronald A. Dallatorre

Squadron personnel prepare their aircraft for flight operations on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72). Lincoln and embarked Carrier Air Wing 2 recently conducted a Joint Task Force Exercise off the coast of Southern California.

BAND, From A-1

band. It was just one of those things in life that comes at you from nowhere, and you have to take it.”

The band also performed at local schools throughout the Sydney area. After a performance at the Bondi Beach Public School, Marines took time to work with the children during a one-on-one music session.

Denisa Kozma, the band director at Kuji Public School, whose students also attended the concert, commented about how the children did not know exactly what to expect but were amazed by what they saw.

“They are going to remember this day for a long time,” said Kozma. “I think this experience

really inspired them, especially our boys. At our school, a lot of the teachers are female, so I was really pleased to see them get so into the music.”

The elementary school children were not the only ones to be so inspired by the band’s music. During their biggest performance of the Glebe Music Festival, the band marched down the town’s main road as spectators lined the sidewalks and trailed the sounds of trumpets and drums.

At the three stops along the parade route, fans swarmed around the band to hear the short concerts performed in the parks. During the “Children of Sanchez,” originally

written by famous musical composer Chuck Mangione, the band’s percussion section mesmerized the crowd with a drum solo that made heads rock and hands clap as sticks twirled and flipped with lighting-fast speed.

“The Glebe Music Festival was definitely one of my favorite events,” said Sgt. Mike Herak, a MarForPac Band drummer from Warner Robins, Ga. “There were a lot of people who followed us all the way down the road and watched all three concerts that we put on. Seeing the little kids sit up in the front — they seemed really entertained by us.”

Before leaving Sydney, the MarForPac Band

was honored to perform at the Reserve Forces Day National Launch 2006 Ceremony at Victoria Barracks; the second oldest military barracks in Australia, built in 1848. The ceremony honored Australian reserve forces that had served overseas. Among the many guests at the event were Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defense Teresa Gambaro and Chief of the Australian Defense Force Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston.

As the Marines marched out onto the parade deck and formed up along side the honorees, they were greeted and thanked for making the event so memorable.

Rappelling incorporated into safety brief

Pfc. Edward C. deBree
Combat Correspondent

With the holidays rapidly approaching, units aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, are conducting safety stand-downs and giving safety briefs that emphasize safety, on and off duty.

On Dec. 9, Marines and Sailors assigned to Marine Corps Air Facility aboard K-Bay combined their safety briefs with rappel-tower and obstacle-course training. During their stand down, approximately 45 Marines and 15 Sailors met at the rappel tower at Landing Zone Boondocker, K-Bay, where some climbed the tower and underwent rappel

training while those on the ground were given safety briefs. For some of the Marines and Sailors, this was their first time climbing the tower and going down the rope. “This was my first time doing this,” said Cpl. Joseph Hallars, weather technician, MCAF. “It was pretty scary at first, but it was fun, once you go through it.”

But the 21-year-old Chicago, Ill. native said that he was not nervous about going down — that is, not until he got up to the top and looked down.

“When I was finally up there looking over the edge, I realized how high up it was,” he said. “Once you’re up there, you realize that the only thing that is keeping you from falling is the rope.”

This was not only the first time down the rope for Hallars, it was also the first time for most of the Sailors.

“I was really excited to do it,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Kenneth Kimple, senior advisor, MCAF. “It was great way to help motivate the Marines and Sailors.”

When Kimple was on

top of the tower and, reportedly, excited about going down, he said he started to get second thoughts about being so high up. But, once he took his first steps off the edge, he said everything the instructors briefed them on fell into place. “When I finally hit the ground, my first thoughts were that I have achieved something I have never done before,” said the 38-year-old Madison, N.J. native. “Today the Marines gave us Sailors the chance to do something that they have to do all the time, like the rappel tower and the obstacle course.” Kimple said that it was a great having a joint-training session, since MCAF is comprised of both Marines and Sailors. “Next time, we’re going to have the Marines go through the wet trainer,” he said. “We should do stuff like this more often.” Marines and Sailors were separated into two groups for the rappel tower. While one group was going down the tower, the other group was getting a safety brief on suicide awareness as well as the obstacle course. “This whole exercise was part of a safety brief, since the holidays are coming up,” said Gunnery Sgt. Julio Somoza, operations chief, MCAF. “We wanted to do something different than just give a brief. So we decided to have them do the rappel tower and run through the ‘O’ course.” The 36-year-old Douglas, Ariz. native went on to say that the overall exercise went very well. It gave Sailors the opportunity to do the rappel tower. “I thought that it was great,” he said. “It brought out the camaraderie in both the Marines and Sailors.”



Pfc. Edward C. deBree

Cpl. Joseph Hallars goes down the rappel tower at Landing Zone Boondocker, Dec. 9, on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay. Marines and Sailors assigned to Marine Corps Air Field went down the tower, ran through the obstacle course and listened to a suicide awareness brief as part of their holiday safety brief.

RETURN, From A-1

from other bases, such as MALS-13, based out of Yuma, Ariz. Both units preformed shipboard operations, conducted in support of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 was assigned to the 3rd Marine Expeditionary

Force in the Western Pacific where they supported the 31st MEU. During their deployment they participated in Exercise Ryukuku Warrior. In addition to supporting ongoing training operations, HMH-362 provided support for President Bush during his visit to Japan this year.

While deployed, HMH-362 underwent a 1st Marine maintenance inspection, which they passed. They received an award from Maj. Gen. George J. Trautman III, commanding general, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, in recognition of their excellent work while in Okinawa. A total of 140 Marines and Sailors assigned to HMH-362 and MALS-24 took part in the

deployment that supported the 31st MEU. Returning Marines and Sailors are now with family and friends for the holiday season. “It feels great to be back home on Marine Corps Base Hawaii,” said Cpl. William J. Payne, hydraulics mechanic, MALS-24. “I missed my wife. I missed driving my truck, I missed being at home.”